

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

UNCLAS STATE 140658

FOLLOWING REPEAT DAMASCUS 2247 ACTION SECSTATE INFO

USDOC DTD 16 JUN

QTE

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 2247

USDOC FOR CAGNE

STATE PLEASE PASS TO ALL NEA POSTS.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTRA, SY, IZ

SUBJ: AIR TRAVEL BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND BAGHDAD

1. NUMEROUS AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN AND OFFICIALS TRAVELING IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAVE INDICATED INTEREST IN GOING ON TO BAGHDAD AFTER A STOP IN DAMASCUS. POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN SYRIA AND IRAQ HAVE INTERRUPTED NORMAL AIR INTERCOURSE. EACH COUNTRY HAS CLOSED ITS AIRPORTS AND AIR SPACE TO THE AIR CARRIER OF THE OTHER. AS A RESULT, SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES AND IRAQI AIRWAYS FOR THE TIME BEING NO LONGER PROVIDE REGULAR SERVICE BETWEEN TWO CAPITALS.

2. EGYPTAIR STILL PROVIDES WEEKLY SATURDAY ROUND-
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TRIP FLIGHTS BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND BAGHDAD. THIS CARRIER IS FREE TO TAKE ON PASSENGERS EMBARKING IN DAMASCUS FOR BAGHDAD.

3. SWISSAIR, INTERFLUG (EAST GERMAN), AND CSA (CZECHOSLOVAKIAN) ALSO MAINTAIN WEEKLY FLIGHTS BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND BAGHDAD. HOWEVER NONE HAS TRAFFIC RIGHTS AND CANNOT NORMALLY ACCEPT PASSENGERS EMBARKING IN ONE CAPITAL AND DISEMBARKING IN THE OTHER. THOSE WHO WISH TO BOOK PASSAGE FROM DAMASCUS TO BAGHDAD ON ONE OF THESE THREE CARRIERS MUST APPLY FOR PERMISSION IN ADVANCE TO SYRIAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES IN DAMASCUS. PERMISSION IS USUALLY GRANTED.

5. PASSENGERS WISHING TO TRAVEL FROM DAMASCUS TO BAGHDAD MAY FIND INDIRECT ALTERNATIVE ROUTES THROUGH AMMAN, BEIRUT OR KUWAIT. THERE IS NO AIR PASSENGER SERVICE BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND AMMAN AND DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT; TRAVELLERS MUST GO BY TAXI. THERE IS A WEEKLY SUNDAY FLIGHT FROM AMMAN TO BAGHDAD BY ALIA (ROYAL JORDANIAN AIRLINES). MIDDLE EAST AIRLINES FLIES DAILY (EXCEPT TUESDAY) FROM BEIRUT TO BAGHDAD. THREE CARRIERS -- SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES, KUWAIT AIRWAYS, AND SAUDI AIRLINES --BETWEEN THEM MAINTAIN DAILY FLIGHTS FROM DAMASCUS TO KUWAIT, WHERE CONNECTIONS CAN BE OBTAINED TO BAGHDAD.

6. THE POLITICAL, AND THUS THE TRANSPORTATION, SITUATION REMAINS FLUID, AND TRAVELLERS ARE ADVISED TO CONSULT WITH THEIR TRAVEL AGENTS OR AIRLINES BEFORE MAKING TRAVEL PLANS.
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